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(Drawn by JOHN GILBERT.)

"There is nothing ye deserve for your malefices but death."—p. 533.

"EVIL MAY DAY."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARY POWELL."

EVIL MAY DAY! How came it by such an evil name?—the sweetest day of all others?" I tell you. Be quiet there, Diccon; leave off hitting Hob. Madge, hush the babe asleep. Turn the dogs out, boys, or else keep 'em quiet. Not

a word will you get from me till there's peace. Throw another billet on the fire. Now, then, are you all settled? Are you all going to be quiet? Now, then— Here comes Giles; make room for him, Kate. Giles, I'm going to tell a tale; a true one; wherein your father and I were concerned when we were lads. Now, then:

Kate, knowest thou why thou art called Kate? After Queen Katherine: not the present one, but the first; a goodly lady and a godly.

The king, at that time, was lovely in his person, and of sweet conditions. He had not fallen into flesh, as he hath done since. They say he has a machine now, to heave him up-stairs; but I don't believe all that's said—specially of kings and queens. At that time he was scarce an eagle's talon thick,—come, at all events, his waist was as slim as Nell's. Fine broad shoulders, too, you know; a well-opened eye, quick as a hawk's; short, thick, curly hair; a merry mouth, deep chest, and *such* an arm for a bow! A capital archer was King Hal.

He encouraged archery; he loved it: he made us all archers; he said it was the Englishman's proper weapon. You know Harold wasn't beaten till he got an arrow in his eye. William Rufus was slain with an arrow. Farther back still, King Saul's last battle was lost because he was sore wounded of the archers; wherefore one of the first things David did was to make the children of Judah learn the use of the bow: behold, it is written in the book of Jasher.

"Thought I was going to tell you a story?" Why, so I am. I'm coming to the beginning of it as fast as a horse can gallop. I've a notion, though, that I shall stop, perhaps in the most interesting part, if you interrupt me any more. (Kate, your mother wants something.)

On as fine a May morning as ever was—sky blue, grass green, hedges full of flowers and of singing birds—King Harry the Eighth, being young and full of joy, rose right early in the morning, and put on his clothes to go a-maying. And what were his clothes? They were of white satin; ay, and his knights, squires, and gentlemen were in white satin too, with embroidery, and gold chains, and plumage, just as if they were going to a grand wedding. And all the yeomen of the guard were in white saracen, with bows of various coloured ribbons round their black velvet caps.

As for the ladies, I cannot tell you how fine they were: they made me blink, like a flash of lightning, or the sun coming suddenly from behind a cloud, they were so dazzling; and whether their eyes or their jewels, or their gold and silver apparel were the brightest, I could not possibly determine.

Every man had his bow and arrows, and every

man went to fetch a sprig of may to set in his cap. From the days of Crecy and Poitiers archery had been on the decline, in spite of compulsory edicts; but now, what all the king's horses and all the king's men had failed to effect, came to pass through the example of the young king himself, who was a capital bowman. He founded the fraternity of St. George, who were to shoot at all manner of marks and butts, and all manner of fowls, in the city or out of it; and if any archer were so misfortunate as to shoot his comrade, he was not to be sued or apprehended for it, if so be he had called out, "Fire!" before he shot.

Well, on this May Day I am speaking of, we young citizens of every parish had met overnight to join in the celebration of it, had divided ourselves into companies, and repaired to the woods and groves about town, some to Hampstead, some to Highgate, to Greenwich, to Shooter's Hill, and so forth. My division went to Shooter's Hill, where we spent the entire night in cutting down green boughs and branches, to make a goodly bower, and in divers sports and pastimes. What mirth we made, to be sure! We were well victualled too, and had plenty of eating and drinking. My father, who was a stalwart man, in the flower of his age, just as I may be now, was to play Robin Hood, and right well he looked his part, with jerkin and hose of Lincoln green, wide buskins of buff, a bugle at his side, a quiver at his back, a feather in his cap, and a tall bow in his hand. You might have thought him the Earl of Huntingdon himself. At his back were two hundred archers, equipped like himself, and goodly to see, too, though he towered over them from the shoulders and upward.

To him comes the king—and oh!—was it not like King David coming to Araunah, both of them so kingly! You see, morning was just breaking, the sun flaming up from clouds of carnation and gold, the birds singing their hearts out, the air full of gossamer, the grass shining with May-dew (so good for the complexion, Kate!)

Robin Hood—that's my father—and his two hundred men, had drawn up in goodly array, as the king and queen, and lords and ladies came riding by. When King Harry saw Robin Hood, he slackened his pace, and seeing my father step forward, no whit abashed, but with fit deference, ye may depend, the king halted.

"What is it, good man?" quoth he.

Quoth my father—that's Robin Hood—"May it like your grace to see my men shoot?"

"Yea, verily," quoth the king.

Then Robin Hood gave a shrill whistle; and all his archers shot and loosed at once. He whistled again, and they all shot again; he whistled again, and they all shot again; and the whiz of so many arrows let flying at once made a great and strange

noise, that mightily pleased the king. They all belonged to the king's guard.

Next, Robin Hood stepped forth, and said, "May it like your grace, and the queen's grace, to come into the greenwood and see how we archers live?"

"It liketh me well," said the king; and so said the queen, when he asked her if she would adventure herself among so many outlaws. Her answer was pretty, methinks—"If it pleaseth your grace, I am content." She spoke with a somewhat foreign accent. Ye may be sure we lads looked at her with all our eyes. She was little, with auburn hair under a white silken coif, edged with big pearls, and she rode a Spanish jennet. Behind her were eleven ladies, the fairest in the land, all mounted on ambling palfreys.

Then the archers wound their horns, and the whole troop accompanied the king's grace into the wood that lieth under Shooter's Hill. Here we had made an arbour of green boughs, and within it was a table covered with a fair white cloth, and set with flagons and trenchers and dishes; and smoking-hot venison, the outlaws were supposed to have killed, was set before the king.

And the king said, "Verily, this is a sumptuous breakfast!"

Said Robin Hood, "Sir, outlaws have only venison to their breakfast. We give you the best cheer we have."

Said the king, "Right so; I desire no better."

So they ate till they were sufficed, and made very merry; and then forth they fared, on their return to Greenwich, followed by crowds of people greatly solaced at the sight. And a pageant came forth to meet them, of a chariot drawn by five horses, with a fair lady seated on every horse.

Now, when we had seen the last of the king and his goodly equipage, we lads trooped in crowds, with much vociferation and rejoicing, to deck the great May-pole, which was drawn by forty yoke of oxen, each ox having his horns tipped with a nosegay of flowers. Men, women, and children accompanied us, laden with boughs and with flowers: the minstrels and morris-dancers went before; the hobby-horse, dragon, and salvage-men followed after. Ye never knew such frolicking in your life. It *was* sport!

That is to say, it was sport as long as they all kept their tempers. And why should not they, on May Day, of all the days in the year?

Well, if the Evil One found his way into the fairest May garden that ever was, where Eve herself was May queen, likely enow it was that he should come among us poor sinners. And if the fair ladies in the pageant embodied spring, vegetation, perfume, flower-blossoms, softening showers, and such like, I fear me that envy, hatred, malice, and mischief were among us dis-

embodied, and seeking what evil they could set us on.

For, you see, a great many foreigners had settled down among us, with their wares and their handicrafts and their outlandish gibberish, that we Londoners could not abide; thinking with some reason that it was to our hindrance and impoverishment. Now, when a spite smoulders in the heart, it soon finds a cranny to creep out at. One of the morris-dancers was a French varlet, whose proper name was Dennis, though he chose to call himself Dennee. Being as lissom as the thinnest split whalebone, he cut his capers higher than the rest, and bounded like a shuttlecock. Whenever he came down again, it pleased Tom Fool to hit him a thwack with his lath sword, and cry, "Higher! higher!" which, at length, incensed Dennee, who sharply turned on him with—

"Vat for you say higher, higher? you von great big Tom Fool!"

"It takes a wise man to be a good fool," answers Tom, hitting him again; on which Dennee showed all his teeth, and chattered like a monkey. Moreover, he snatched Tom Fool's sword and shivered it in splinters, on which Tom, without hesitation, gave him a black eye. You should have heard the uproar there was. "Fight it out! a ring, my masters!" but all that was quickly put down by the elder and cooler heads, and what began in anger ended in peals of laughter. Dennee's anger did not end, though—it smouldered, and he cursed and felt for his knife. Howbeit, the festivity of the occasion was too much for him, and soon he was at his shuttlecock leaps again; while Tom Fool was hunting for a new sword.

"Was *this* evil May Day?" No, no; not it. I'm coming to it presently. I've just hinted at the heartburnings that were beginning to show themselves between the Londoners and the foreigners. Maybe there were dozens of such trivial quarrels between the two parties as that between Tom Fool and Dennee; and when one began to tell his fellow what a grudge he owed such and such a Frenchman, or Spaniard, or Dutchman, the other would say, "Ay, ay, I was served just such an ugly trick;" and so fomenting each other's wrath, instead of assuaging it, which was not the right thing, you know, boys.

Well, this feeling grew worse and worse; and I had my share of it, for it seemed to me that Dennee had a mind to be my sister Kate's sweetheart; else why should he always be offering her posies, and sweet things, and bone-carvings? In truth, he had a pretty turn that way; but she would none of his gauds, which ought to have satisfied me; but I was vexed because she would speak well of him.

The year ran its course, and May Day had nearly come round again, when, returning home one

evening, I met Dennee hurrying along as if a mad dog were at his heels, carrying a bag with him. I said, "Whither so fast, Master Dennee?"

He said, "*Alley, alley!* Not you hinder me, I go far, far away."

"What!" said I, "are you going for good?"

"*Wee, wee, wee!* for very good, because you all is so bad. *Bone swore!*"

Well, I thought this strange, though I was not sorry to be quit of him.

Presently Giles, my fellow-apprentice, came up to me, shaking with laughter, and caught hold of my shoulder to steady himself.

"I've sent Dennee off with a flea in his ear," said he. "There's a rumour all over the city that the 'prentices are going to slay all the aliens; so I told him of it, and he's off."

"Belike you've done him a good turn then," said I; "but sure, the report hath no foundation?"

"I know not that," said Giles: "there's many a quarrel to be settled, and we owe them a spite."

"You! are you going to have a hand in it?"

"Why not? Will you join us?"

"No, I think not. I've no quarrel to pick with any, unless Dennee, and he's gone."

"Then, an you will not, mum's the word; but look out for something on May Day."

I mused in my mind what this might portend. However, just before the day came, every alderman received instructions to give orders personally to his ward, that no man should on any pretext whatsoever stir out of his house after nine o' the clock, but keep his doors shut and his family and servants within till nine o'clock the next morning.

As it happened, I was playing at bucklers with my fellow-'prentice in Cheap, when the alderman of our ward, a fussy old citizen, chanced to come by, just after hearing the proclamation, which we lads knew nothing of. Pushing through the knot of bystanders who were cheering us on, he cried aloud—

"Leave off! leave off, I say!"

"Why?" returns Giles, continuing his play.

"Dost defy me, knave? Here, constables, take them both to the Compter."

"Let them if they dare!" cries Giles in a passion; and I, too, was incensed, and began to bawl—

"'Prentices! 'prentices! clubs! clubs!" on which swarms of lusty young fellows flung themselves over counters and bulkheads, and came trooping and whooping to the rescue, armed with whatever it might chance.

Mr. Alderman turned as red as a turkey-cock, and backed into a shop, through which he was let out by a back way into a bye-street and so escaped.

But not so soon was allayed the uproar he had

excited. Remember, boys, it's easier to overset a skillet of boiling water than to heal them that are scalded by it. Journeymen and their masters now swelled the throng of 'prentices; serving-men, watermen, and even courtiers. Giles and I, who had been laid hands on, were soon released. At St. Martin's Gate, we were met by good Sir Thomas More, who spread out his hands towards us, and cried—

"I exhort you all, my good people, to go home; for you are in danger of being called in question for this day's uproar."

But he might as well have bid the wind to change. People were now beginning to throw stones from St. Martin's, and one of them hit a sergeant-at-arms, one Nicholas Dennis, who, in a fury, shouted "Down with them!" Meanwhile, others, moved by evil-doers of the baser sort, were forcing the doors and windows of houses, and flinging the goods into the street.

A cry was now raised—"To the Frenchmen in Cornhill!" and a rush was made to that place, where was a French lodging-house. This was broken into and stripped, the terrified Frenchmen fleeing for their lives. The same thing occurred in various other quarters; in short, the doings of that Evil May Day (for the sack and pillage continued till three o'clock on May morning, amid inexpressible clamour and violence) were such that Giles and I slunk home ashamed, and were rather glad to be roughly handled by our master, and locked up in the dark on bread and water.

Meanwhile the lord mayor had seized and sent to prison upwards of three hundred, including women and young boys. Three days after, they were brought forth and tried at Guildhall; and John Lincoln and twelve others were sentenced to hanging. Oh, how our hearts were dismayed! How Giles and I bewailed ourselves in secret for having set this big stone a rolling that was to crush us all! for, on the 22nd of May, after we had remained three weeks in fearful jeopardy, the king came to Westminster Hall, with his grand lords, and the lord mayor and aldermen, and commanded that all the prisoners should be brought forth. Forth they all came, young and old, in lamentable case; dirty, torn, squalid, with pale faces smeared with tears, in their shirts, and with halters round their necks, four hundred men and boys, besides eleven women. Giles and I followed after them, shaking in our shoes, for all we were not in the scrape, because our own consciences condemned us.

Well, when they were all brought before the majesty of the king's presence, the cardinal rose, and with a terrible voice, charged the lord mayor and aldermen with gross negligence in not allaying sooner the outbreak. "And as for you, ye sinful people," said he, with a dreadful look at the

prisoners, "there is nothing ye deserve for your malefices but death."

Then they all fell on their knees, and began wailing and weeping, that it was dreadful to hear and see; and cried they, "Mercy—mercy, gracious lord and king!—mercy!"

Then the Dukes of Norfolk, Suffolk, and the other great lords joined their supplications to those of the miserable caitiffs, and said to the king, "We beseech your grace, of your abundant mercy, to pardon them all, howbeit hanging would be but too good for them."

Then the king, after a pause, tempering the severity of his aspect, said, "Well, I will. I pardon ye all."

Thereupon, so mad with joy were the prisoners,

that they plucked off their halters, and flung them right up to the roof.

Now, mark what Giles and I did. No sooner did we perceive the king's countenance change, than we slipped into a corner, whipped off everything but our shirts, put something about our necks for halters, and down on our bare knees with the rest! Thus we came in for our share when he cried, "I pardon ye all."

Ah! he was a good and merciful king then. It has been only by little and little that he has changed. He's a warning to you all, boys. He was as good as any of you, then. And for my part, I cannot help remembering the kindness of his youth, especially concerning that Evil May Day.

THE ART OF LIVING HAPPILY.

"He that hath it shall abide satisfied."—Prov. xix. 23.

THERE is an evil under the sun, and it is common among men; a universal disease, an inward complaint that sickens the heart and gnaws away slowly at the life; a kind of evil philosopher's stone which turns all that it touches into dross. It is called Unhappiness.

There was an ancient philosopher who had great riches and power besides his wisdom, and his wisdom was also great. He lived amid gorgeous luxuriance of everything that ingenuity could devise to please and gratify, and interested and amused himself with carrying on great and magnificent works. He had his fill of every earthly good, and his wisdom remained with him. Now, one would be ready to think that if anybody could be happy he must have been the man; but he was not the man. For, when he passed his enjoyments and labours under review, one touch of the stone wrung from him the disconsolate exclamation, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" The sorrow of his exclamation is touching, its bitterness is sublime, and its truth finds an echo in every heart. Who has not felt, in some pause of his career, and looking backwards and forwards, as if all were but "vanity and vexation of spirit," and there were no "profit under the sun?" It is the interpretation of the weary tick-tick, that falls through the years from the great clock-tower of Time. Day after day, year after year, century after century, the heavy pendulum swings backwards and forwards uttering its constant, monotonous, melancholy sound, "Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities." Every one comes to learn its meaning sooner or later. It early disturbs the dream of youth; and beats with wearisome persistency in the ear of manhood. It is a painful sound. We

cannot, indeed, long listen to it quietly, it would either stupefy or madden the brain. The toils and cares of the world, though in themselves often a burden, are quite as often a blessing, for their noise muffles the sound and prevents us being driven to distraction; they also keep men from taking to questionable modes of attaining the same end: hence the proverb, "The greatest want is the want of a want." Many strive to drown themselves in business or pleasure that they may not hear; and if regular cares do not come in course, a way is soon found out to make them; but it is impossible altogether to succeed in stopping the ears; there is always a confused, unpleasant sound, and at every cessation of their own din the old constant note comes out again distinctly, marching on with unvaried tread to death, judgment, eternity.

Who does not know the dull pain and depression of a headache, and the sharp agony and pang of toothache? Yet the malady of which we have been speaking—the heartache or mindache—is worse than them both; for it is deeper, more constant, and more incurable. This is a sore evil; and it has sometimes gone on to such an extent, and the consequent pain to such a height, that people have even committed self-destruction to get rid of it.

The domain of Nature has been ransacked and turned over and over again by pharmacopologists innumerable; and every now and then medicines of various kinds have made a noise in the world, till repeated experience has proved their worthlessness; patients have tried nostrums of every name and nature, but all in vain, or with very partial success; science and philosophy have lent their aid; but only to be baffled, both as to the

character of the disease and the discovery of a cure.

"In vain, alas! is Nature's aid,
The work exceeds all human pow'r."

And conscious of their inability to grapple with such an evil, men have embodied the results of their philosophy in an aphorism, which carries but cold comfort to the sufferer: "What can't be cured must be endured."

Now, the existence of disease at all is an abnormal state of matters: and if an antidote cannot be found in one quarter, men naturally turn to another. But in this case, humanity is sadly at variance with its usual practice. It persists in seeking where the history and experience of all time past have declared that what it wants is not to be found. Each generation seems to think itself wiser than the last in the matter, and with modern skill and appliance again digs over the old ground, wondering like its predecessors that it cannot find as it proceeds; and when it has gone through the allotted space once, turning and digging it over again; until at length, with a blind persistency and dogged, semi-despair, the work grows into a sort of mania, like that of the Seeker, after the "great carbuncle."

If men had no knowledge or means of knowing anything else, the wonder would not be so great; but with "intimations of immortality" within, and a written revelation of the "way" without, and with no lack of instances of the beneficial effects of the course of treatment therein prescribed, that *any*—not to say the *many*—should still vainly clutch at the shadow while they let the substance go by, is a marvel without precedent, and can only be explained on the theory that their vision is distorted and turned into obliquity by some evil power.

Many times and oft has the experience of some been a living demonstration to others of the truth that

" 'Tis religion that can give
Sweetest pleasures while we live;
'Tis religion must supply
Solid comfort when we die."

And people in general partly believe the testimony, and fully intend to put it to the proof some day. And then they set off on the old track, to seek first those things which are needful for the body—and more if they can get it—forgetting that the great Teacher said, "Seek ye *first* the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Is it any wonder then that the "inner man" feels in a miserable way, the result of improper or insufficient nourishment, when it is only supplied with the husks that go to support the outer, and a little of very diluted real food, accompanied with a vague occasional promise that it will get something better by-and-by?

Whatever may have been said to the contrary—and it is not much comparatively—that the

Christian religion believed and acted on must prove a source of joy and happiness, admits of easy demonstration. Leaving altogether out of sight the truth that the man who devotes all his energies to the things of earth and time outrages the higher part of his nature, which in turn takes its revenge upon him by depriving him of the satisfaction which his pursuits might otherwise have afforded; leaving that out of sight, there is a conscience in man—though some, goaded by its accusing voice, have attempted to get quit of the discomfort by denying its existence, with what success is best known to themselves—there is a conscience within that pleads guilty, and guilt awakens fear, making existence, when men take time and think about it, little better than a continual misery, and turning the natural enjoyment of life into gall and wormwood. Or granting that conscience may be deadened and the inward voice silenced; there still remain, as we have said, the "intimations of immortality," which must at least create doubt if not fear; and the vision of death, which *will* intrude, and thoughts of the uncertainty of the unknown darkness into which we must soon go, and which, for aught that one can tell, may be as the Bible says, must prove a bitter ingredient in the cup of life. Or, to take the lowest ground, the climax of sceptical content and hope, granting that the man congratulates himself on having managed to lay his great enemy, conscience, dead at his feet, and to erase from his being every trace of immortal existence, and reduced himself in every respect—except a little matter of intelligence more or less—to a level with the beasts that perish, there remains the uncertainty of life and the certainty of death, and that must often be a sore point with him. He may be weary enough of life, yet

" 'Tis life, of which our nerves are scant,
'Tis life, deep life, for which we pant,
More life, and fuller, that we want ;"

not death, from which all life shrinks with terror; nor the grave, with its horror of darkness, and worms, and corruption. He knows that he may die at any moment, that in course of a few years he *must* die—must leave all his business engagements, all his social enjoyments, all his pleasures, all his wealth and fame, if he have any, and become a loathsome carcase, to be buried out of sight and forgotten—left to crumble in rottenness and decay. He cannot always keep such thoughts at arm's-length, and they are enough to poison the strength of any life. What heart can one have for anything, whose goal for all hope and aspiration is the grave! You may as well expect the prisoner in the condemned cell to "laugh and grow fat"—the only difference is, that he is likely to die in a more shocking manner, and a little sooner, though even that is uncertain. Such a sepulchral outlook is ill-fitted to render life happy.

At the best, it may, perhaps, be regarded with stoical indifference; but very few can ever attain to such a negative sort of felicity as that, and he who can be *happy* in it is not in his sober senses.

On the other hand, true religion, not ignoring but confessing all these things to be great disturbers of our peace, and to which we are in bondage, at one grand stroke sweeps them all into oblivion, and sets us free. We are no longer left to mourn our inheritance of a few feet of earth—"this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and mortality shall be swallowed up of life." We are no longer left in doubt about the darkness of "the valley and the shadow of death;" "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." We are no longer left in helpless fear concerning the things that conscience speaks of—"being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." To those "who obey not the Gospel" the forebodings of conscience culminate in a "certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation." But to those who shape their lives according to its teaching, the dim vision of immortality that dwells in the spirit of man is opened and expanded into the reality of the "life everlasting," all radiant with "joy unspeakable and full of glory."

A living faith and simple trust in the home prepared for us by God, is the only real principle, and it is a powerful one, to counteract "human sadness" and dissatisfaction.

"Oh, happy retribution,
Short toil, eternal rest;
For mortals and for sinners
A mansion with the blest!"

A full belief in the truth that Christ has opened up a way of escape from condemnation by the sacrifice of himself, that it is the great joy of his great loving heart to bring us to heaven, and introduce us to all its fuller life of glory and delight, must of necessity make the present life happier. "Hope deferred maketh the heart sick;" but hope certain to be realised makes the heart strong and glad; and the hope of the heaven that awaits us is surely enough to fill any heart with joy.

"A hope so great and so divine
May trials well endure."

If one has a plentiful share of this world's good, such a prospect will enable him to enjoy it the more; and if one's lot be hard, such a prospect will enable him to bear it the better. In bereavement, such a prospect will temper the anguish of separation by the forward look to the meeting in heaven. In trouble of every kind, such a prospect will enable us to say, with St. Paul, with more or less courage and patience according to the firmness of our faith: "Our light affliction, which is

but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And in the hour of death such a prospect will rob the grisly monarch of his terrors, for "though our earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."

All this is not mere theory and transcendental rhapsody; it is fact, and the consciousness of that has enabled many a one to "run with patience the race set before him," and in dissolution to exult as a conqueror, exclaiming with latest breath, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

But besides the prospect of heaven, the Christian has the present sympathy, and assistance, and comfort of God, through the Holy Spirit. While in this world, in the flesh, our Lord gave the universal invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." And he is the Unchangeable, now and for ever, both able and willing to fulfil his word. Where else can we go with the numberless evils under which we are helpless, but to him? His ear is ever open to the cry of his creatures, his eye sees all their wants, his heart yearns over their trials and temptations, and his ready sympathy "tempers the wind to the shorn lamb." The closer and more hearty our communion with him, the more we can realise this comfort. But often he leads the blind by a way which they know not; and then the thought that we are in his hand, and therefore safe, ought to be enough. "Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God."

There is something inexpressibly grand and glorious in the life which now is, viewed as a state of probation and preparation for that which is to come. Such an aspect and purpose sheds a stream of heavenly glory over man, and his little momentary concerns; and the thousand cares that tug day and night at the skirts of his garments are bathed in the holy light, and become part of the Father's discipline and education, to fit his child for the "inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away."

Thus true religion becomes "an anchor of the soul," in this mysterious and tempestuous existence of ours, and the only antidote for the bane of life, the cure for unhappiness. When we know, and are sure, that God is love, and that he makes all things work together for our good, the sting is taken out of earthly woe, its troubles may wound, but they will not poison the system. While the world invites men to satisfy themselves, by swallowing as much of it as they can before they die, Christianity tells them that satisfaction is not

there, that the harder they try to find it, the bitterer will be their disappointment, and points them to a higher source, even God himself. "At his right hand is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore."

But are all true Christians happy? They are undoubtedly happier than they would be without any hope at all; and the fault is in themselves if they are not largely happy. It must be either from an imperfect apprehension of the whole truth of the Gospel, or a partial application of it to their own case, or a partial endeavour at conformity in the life, that the effect is only partial. We know that the full flood of happiness cannot visit us upon earth: we have neither capacity nor fitness to receive it; but there are foretastes more or less sweet to be found. We cannot expect too much of what Christianity promises; but it is possible under misapprehension to expect in a manner we have no warrant for, or that God sees not to be best for us, and even to expect what is not promised at all. It will not deliver its professors from the effects of their transgressions of natural law; nor from the common "ills that flesh is heir to," though by inculcating the practice of the virtues it does in a measure alleviate some of these. And besides the above-mentioned ills, there is always enough of the "old Adam" within, and temptation without, to disturb and embitter the most pious life. But by-and-by—and this is the comfort—these will all be left behind,

"And pains, and groans, and griefs, and fears,
And death itself shall tie."

Yet those who love God shall live, and wave their

palm of victory over death and hell, and wear the crown of glory, and reign with Christ for ever and ever.

Meanwhile let them rejoice in the prospect, and work for its fulfilment—and seek by frequent communion with God to have their hearts so opened, that both in their joys and sorrows they may be able to catch his sympathy and apprehend his guidance, and be the better prepared for entering into his rest.

Let them not despise things secular, but hail as auxiliaries every true reform, political, educational, moral, sanitary; every little helps, and some little helps much. Yet amid the rabble rout of popular reformations, let not self-amendment be forgotten, but pressed into the foremost rank, and in the highest and truest sense of all. And the constant exercise of virtue and benevolence, and the consolations and hope of true religion, will bring the mind into a condition of sweetness and calm that is a perpetual source of enjoyment—for the calm mind, like still waters, reflects surrounding objects in their justest and truest proportions. A conscience at rest, and a calm mind anchored on the Unchangeable, will be a strong and sweet influence pervading the life, and constituting "the peace of God which passeth all understanding."

And while "the world of the ungodly" must go down to the grave sorrowing without hope, let those who have in their hearts the "larger hope" rejoice amid their sorrow; and for the joy set before them endure the cross, despising the shame, "quit themselves like men," and "fight the good fight of faith," till, crowned with victory, they enter into the joy of their Lord. J. H.

THE WARNING.

WINTER, that old enchanter, quakes,
Hearing the cuckoo's magic word;
With fear the wrinkled wizard shakes,
For Heaven has sent the warning bird.

The shrouds of snow melt into flowers,
Through the dead leaves the primrose comes;

Between the sunny April showers
The swallows dart, the wild bee hums.

Then from the old king's loosening grasp
Expands a little ruffling wing;
And there flits out that gentle bird—
That rainbow-coloured bird—the Spring.

W. THORNBURY.

A BRAVE LIFE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DEEPPDALE VICARAGE," "MARK WARREN," ETC. ETC.

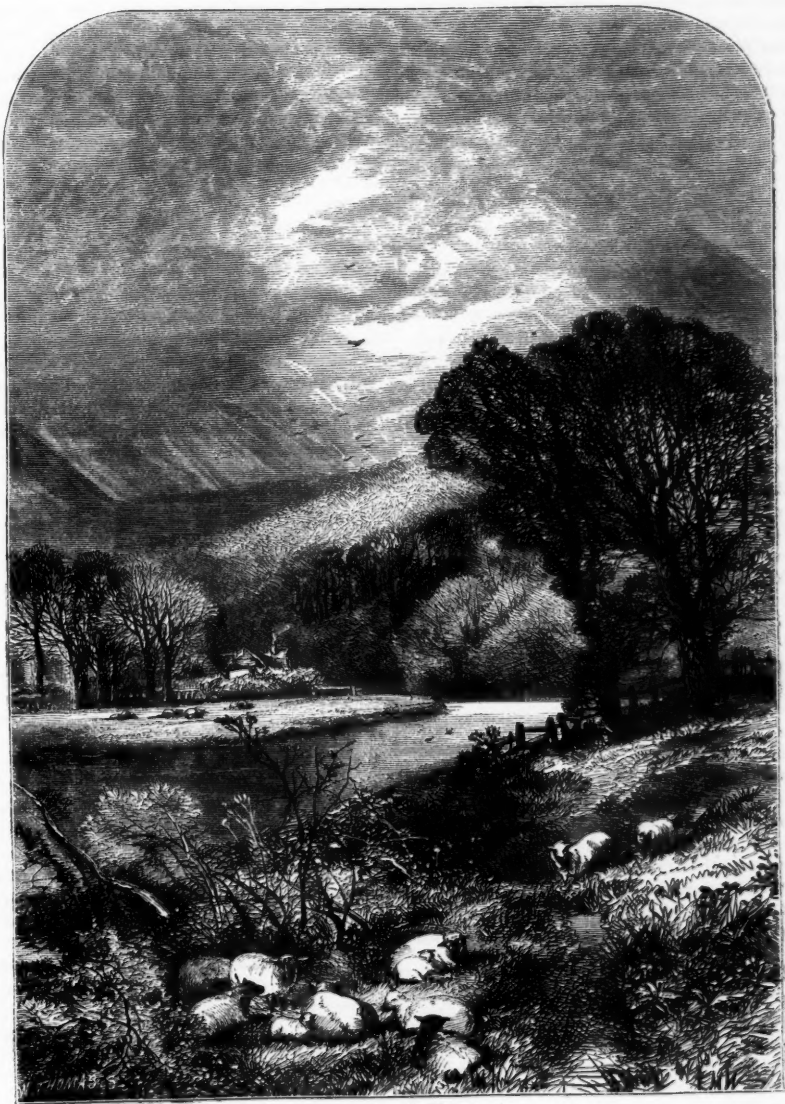
CHAPTER XI.

AN INTERVIEW WITH LADY SYLVESTER.

LADY SYLVESTER was sitting in her usual place, by the drawing-room fire. It was after dinner; the time when she and Alice were alone. Alice was at the piano, playing soft little airs, more to herself than to her mother. For Lady Sylvester's eyes were closed, as if she were asleep.

She was not asleep; her active brain was busy working out problems that might have puzzled a statesman: but outwardly, all seemed peace and repose. The hands, with their lace ruffles, were calmly folded, as though nothing could be expected of them, just then; and the attitude was one of undisturbed tranquillity—tranquillity, however, that did not last long.

A tap at the door, and in came the butler.



(Drawn by E. M. WIMPERIS.)

"Between the sunny April showers
The swallows dart, the wild bee hums."—p. 536.

Lady Sylvester roused herself like one used to sudden surprises. Alice continued to play softly. Her whole soul was in the melody she was bringing forth from the old disused instrument. She did not notice the entrance of the butler.

"If you please, your ladyship," began the man, "I am very sorry, but John Humphreys is here."

"Well?" said Lady Sylvester, haughtily, as though the very existence of such an individual was unknown to her.

"He wishes to see Mr. Sylvester," continued the man, respectfully.

"Mr. Sylvester is not at home."

And the proud head was laid back again on the cushion. The old servant hesitated.

An initiated person might have detected an expression of uneasiness in the piercing eye of Lady Sylvester.

"He refuses to leave the house until he has seen your ladyship."

A sudden and deep silence. Alice's fingers stopped abruptly. The silence did not last many minutes.

"Tell him he must come again, when my son is at home."

This mandate proceeded from the lips of her ladyship. The butler retired, softly and respectfully. Alice rose, and came to her mother.

"Who is John Humphreys?" she asked.

"No one that you need know anything about, Alice."

"But is he," she came nearer, and spoke the words fearfully, "is he a creditor?"

Lady Sylvester had not time to answer. The butler had come back again.

"I am sorry to trouble your ladyship, but the man will not go."

Alice's face looked scared. Lady Sylvester was impassive and self-possessed as ever.

"Tell him I am coming."

He was waiting. At first he was afraid she would not come, and that, as he said afterwards, he should have to proceed to extremities. What those extremities were, he never mentioned, for he had no need to have recourse to them. Lady Sylvester was coming.

He rose, for he had sat down, his hat in his hand. He meant to be quite respectful, and behave as to a lady. He looked towards the door, and quietly bided his time.

When the door opened, and she came in—Lady Sylvester herself—John Humphreys was somewhat confounded. His task—good, simple-minded man—had seemed easy enough, a few minutes ago. The case was different now, in the actual presence of the woman he had demanded to see.

She swept by him, with her trailing robe, and sat down in the chair, where Raymond had once sat. Then she looked him, as he afterwards said, "through and through." By this time, he had recovered a little of his courage, for he had come on an important errand, and was not to be browbeaten by a woman.

She had not spoken, or made the slightest sign of recognition. Now, that he was standing before her, she addressed him for the first time.

"You have wished to see me; what have you to say?"

The sound of her voice struck a kind of chill into John. He paused ere he could reply.

"I am sorry to trouble your ladyship," he began, but she made a sign of impatience.

"Pass by that, if you please, John Humphreys."

"As your ladyship pleases. My errand is a very simple one, and straightforward as the day. I have come to ask for my money."

"And is it usual in these cases to demand it of ladies?" She said it a cutting tone, meant to be ironical.

"No, madam—my lady, I mean," interrupted John, hastily; "not unless, as in the present instance, the gentleman keeps out of the way."

A flush rose to the proud features. The eyes gave a keener flash; but she kept them fixed upon him. She meant that he should quail before them, but he did not.

"If, at any time, our house did you the honour of asking you a favour," said Lady Sylvester, "need you insult it by mistrust? What does your conduct mean, John Humphreys?"

"My lady, I never should have mistrusted," said John, again hastily, "if I had been paid in reasonable time. And my conduct means simply this: I want the money, and I will have it."

"If that is all you have to say," she replied, rising as though the interview were at an end, "I advise you to send in your claim to our solicitor; families, such as ours, do not choose to be troubled with paltry affairs like these." And she drew her shawl round her, as though intending to depart.

"Lady Sylvester," said John, firmly, "I do not mean to apply to your solicitor any more. I am tired of it. I mean to get the money by law."

She did not answer. She was moving towards the door, as grand, John said to Rachel, as any empress.

"I mean to get the money by law," continued he, in the same resolute voice; "so I advise your ladyship to take warning in time. When the first break comes in the walls, depend on it their doom is near!"

She looked back at him with a scornful smile, as though she defied him. John returned look for look, and as he did so, her ladyship passed out.

He had got nothing by his interview—Rachel said he never would; but he had advertised them what he meant to do.

"And now for law," said John Humphreys, as he walked briskly homeward; "now for law!"

CHAPTER XII.

WHAT RICHARD FANAN WAS ABOUT.

It was a little low room, with the furniture broken and battered, and the casement off the hinges, and the window stuffed with straw. It was as wretched a place as you could put your head in; but it was the home of Richard Fanan.

One thing, only, had a ray of cheerfulness about it. A huge fire blazed and crackled on the hearth. By

the fire sat Richard and his colleagues. They were evil-looking men, with the same wolfish physiognomy that he had himself; and the meeting together, in this miserable haunt, was, to say the least of it, suspicious.

"Now, then," said Richard, looking round, "I suppose we are all here?"

"Yes, we are all here," replied the man whom the reader has seen before, in the presence of Mr. Mapleson.

"Now, our way seems to be pretty easy," said Richard. "We've got to act on the principle of *intimidation*. I'll tell you what Mr. Mapleson has done for us! He has screwed down our wages; he has made hard terms with us, as to the days we've worked for him; he's kept back our money, and he's turned us adrift in the dead of the winter. Just give a look at my place here, boys, and then say what sort of a master Josiah Mapleson has been!"

There was an inner room which opened out of the one where the men were sitting. In it, on the bare floor, crouched a wretched woman with an infant in her arms, and three ragged children nestling near to her, as though for warmth. It was Richard Fanan's wife, and if she dare have spoken, she would have proclaimed aloud, "No, Richard, it was not Josiah Mapleson, it was your other master, *drink*, that has brought you to this."

But she did not say it, poor creature! it would have been as much as her life was worth.

"I'll tell you what," said Richard, savagely, "we'll have it out of that fellow some of these days!"

"So we will; and the sooner the better," echoed his friends.

"There are two ways of dealing with him," continued Richard; "he's laid up with the gout, you know, and does not get to the mill. Now he's got a new man—a raw young fellow—it will be very easy work to manage. Bless you, why, he'll bend like a straw!"

"I'm not so sure of that," said Jem Carter, speaking very deliberately. "That young fellow, as you call him, has an old head on his shoulders; and he aint one to be put down either—I knows it!"

"Why, what do you know?" asked Richard, eyeing him contemptuously.

"I know I tried it on with him. I went up to the mill, and thinks I'll bully him into taking me on again; and I tells him it is the safest plan to knock under to us men a little, that he was *one*, and we was *many*, and so on."

"Well, what did he say?" asked Richard, impatiently.

"Say! he said, 'I'll tell you what, my man, if you were five hundred to one against me, and I was in the right, and you in the wrong, I would not give it up.' And he meant it too. You should have seen the look he gave me."

"You are such a coward, Jem Carter. Now, if it had been me—"

"You had better let it be *you* next time," sneered the other, "and see how you get on."

"I do mean it should be *me*, Jem; I'm not one as

shrinks from my duty," said Richard, with a strange misapplication of the word. "And I'll tell you what we'll do. We'll first pay Mr. Blake a visit when he don't just happen to expect us. And if he can't be brought to reason, why, then, I've another scheme in hand; a bold one, but we'll carry it through, lads! see if we don't!"

"What is it?" asked more voices than one.

Richard gave a suspicious glance round. Then he lowered his voice almost to a whisper. "We'll fire the mill!"

It was a desperate proposition; so bold, and so reckless, indeed, that it caused a momentary silence. Richard was carrying his colleagues further than they meant to go.

He saw the effect he had produced, for he was a sharp-witted man enough; but he knew also how to counteract it. Looking round he said—

"Now, them as are cowards had better just get up and go away; we don't want 'em here."

No one stirred. The word *coward* was an epithet which none seemed desirous of earning. Then Richard went on—

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"And if he won't do it?"

"Then," and Richard threw an evil glance round, "then he had better look to it, that is all!"

A short silence followed these words; but on the whole the men were quite as desperate and as reckless as Richard. They were all of them out of work, and out at elbows, and they all bore a deadly grudge against Mr. Mapleson. In fact, when they had had a little time to digest the plan propounded, it seemed to have a terrible fascination for them. They were quite ready and willing to undertake the work cut out for them. The only one who secretly hesitated was Jem Carter. He was not quite so hardened as the rest, and he had a considerable amount of misgiving as to what Harold Blake would do. And if Harold Blake stood firm, then the consequences might

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be more important than he reckoned for. But Jem did not like to be thought a coward; and whatever his misgivings were, he kept them to himself. He professed himself in readiness to do whatever the leader of this dark little conspiracy desired.

It was then planned that the following night the six men should assemble near the mill, one by one, so as not to attract the least observation. When the workpeople issued forth prior to the mill being closed, the conspirators were to contrive to slip in. As each man was well versed in the inns and outs of the place, this would not be so very difficult. And once safe in the mill, the rest of the work would be easy. They would have to wait till all the stragglers were out of sight and hearing, and then they might begin as soon as they liked.

When all this was settled, the conclave broke up, and Richard Fanan's wife crept timidly back to the fire. Richard did not stay to bear her company, and this, alas! was no unusual thing. He and his associates betook themselves to the "Green Dragon," to make out, as he observed, the rest of the evening!

CHAPTER XIII.

DANGER, AND NO SIGNALS.

"I AM sure it is very wretched, being left all day by myself; you would not like it, Harold."

"I have to do many things I don't like, Charley," replied Harold, gently. "Besides, I am at home now," added he, putting a fresh lump of coal on the fire.

"Yes, at home now; but it's nearly eight o'clock, and I have not seen you since breakfast," said Charley, in a querulous tone. "I can't think why you need stay over hours at that nasty mill!"

"Because, my dear, the master is laid up with gout, that is why," said Harold, quietly.

"Yes; and I am to suffer—when poor mamma always said——"

"Hush, Charley! hush, my little man!" and he came and stroked the fair hair—almost like a girl's—that clustered over Charley's forehead; "we must not go back, dear: forward is our motto."

"Not mine though; I have nothing to look forward to, lying here all day by myself."

"Has not Mrs. Maynard been to sit with you?"

"Yes, a little while. Well, she did sit with me this afternoon; but one does not like to be dependent on one's landlady for society."

"I think Mrs. Maynard is a very good sort of woman, Charley—and is as kind to you as she can be."

"Yes, she is kind; but then she is not enough. I want a change of faces; and I want to get out, and see something of the town. What is there to look at from that window, but chimney tops?"

"You shall get out as soon as the weather changes," said Harold, in the soothing tone he was used to adopt to his querulous brother.

"But what is there for me to ride in? You won't let me have a carriage, and there are no Bath-chairs in this nasty horrid place!"

"I dare say I can borrow you a chair, or perhaps

buy one, when the money comes in, Charley. In the meantime, dear, just try to be a little patient. Perhaps I ought not to say so, either," added Harold, looking at the frail, suffering form on the sofa, "for I am so strong myself, thank Heaven, and have never known an ache or pain in my life. There is no knowing what my patience would have been!" and he laughed cheerfully.

Yet Harold knew in his secret heart the reason of this incessant complaining. Poor Charley had no deep source of consolation to turn to, in his hour of need. His Bible was never read. He had no sweet thoughts of that eternal rest that remains to weary sufferers. He was dependent on the passing moment for comfort or for amusement.

Harold's character was of another stamp. He was well disciplined in the Christian life; and this was the foundation of his courage, his patience, his self-denial. He would fain have guided Charley into the same safe and narrow road. But it is not in man to change the worldly heart, and implant a new and spiritual life. Harold knew this, and he never failed to pray that God, in his own good time, would bring about this happy event.

Nothing could exceed his forbearance with his sick brother. When he came home at night, he devoted himself wholly to Charley; he read to him, he talked to him, he played chess with him—the game in which Charley took a special delight. He never rested from his labours till the weak, crippled form was carried into the adjoining room, and till the eyes were closed in sleep. Then, and not till then, had Harold a few minutes of his own.

He would spend them in reading or in writing. Sometimes he would sit, his head resting on his hand, and indulging in a momentary abstraction. And, at such intervals, he would open a little box, lined with crimson velvet, that lay upon the table. The box contained two portraits—the portrait of Harold's father, and of his mother.

He never looked at them without tears. Sometimes he would be so unmanned, that he would actually weep. He had loved them dearly, spite of their shortcomings. His father had been ill for many months, and Harold had the hope that he, and indeed both these dear ones, had found refuge in God; that they were taken home ere the evil days had come.

He never indulged himself in these musings. He must seek strength, not tamper with the elements of weakness. He must be brave, and fight the battle well! There was only himself to do it. If he fell, what would become of Charley?

He was up betimes the next morning. It was his practice to call in on his employer, as he went to the mill. Mr. Mapleson was confined to his room, and was likely to be for some time; consequently more fell on Harold's shoulders than was usual, or had been anticipated.

"But he does admirably! If I had searched the kingdom through, I could not have found a better overseer," Mr. Mapleson had said to his friends.

Harold was admitted to the sick room, where his employer was sitting in an easy chair, his foot carefully resting on cushions.

"A shame too, Mr. Blake, that I should have the gout," he said, in answer to Harold's inquiries; "I that am the most abstemious man in the world."

"Perhaps you have been too abstemious," said Harold.

"I think not; but you see, Mr. Blake, gout is hereditary in our family, and that's it. The children suffer for the parents."

A true saying in more senses than one; and Harold felt it so. His thoughts, for the moment, wandered, but he called them back.

"All is right, I suppose, as usual?" said Mr. Mapleson, recurring to business.

"Right, as far as I can judge," replied Harold; "and I am as vigilant, I hope, as most men."

"Workpeople pretty quiet?"

"Quite so. I hear no complaints, and things are going on, as far as I can see, in a satisfactory manner."

"You have heard no more of Jem Carter?"

"No," said Harold, with a smile.

"Or of that ruffianly fellow, Richard Fanan?"

"No."

"Ah! that's well. If ever they come on the premises again, they will find us one too many for them. I should think Richard has absconded, or else is in gaol."

"I know nothing about him," replied Harold.

"The less the better!" said Mr. Mapleson.

A short conversation on business matters, a few technicalities in which the reader will take no interest, and Harold took leave of his employer, and started off for the mill. The day was not different from any other day, as far as its duties were concerned. Of its risks Harold knew nothing. He was extremely busy. He had scarce time to run

home and snatch his dinner. Charley was waiting for him, full of complaints as usual. He had nothing to do—nothing to amuse himself with. His eyes ached and he could not read. He wished Harold would stay with him, and not go back to the mill. It was a vain wish, but Harold spent a few moments, he could ill spare, in trying to soothe him. As he went downstairs, he said to the landlady—

"Can you sit with Charley this afternoon, Mrs. Maynard?"

"Indeed, and that I will," said the landlady, good-humouredly; "but it will be for your sake, Mr. Blake, and not for his. He is that fretting, and pining, and worretting, it's enough to wear the life out of you!"

Harold looked grave, and the good woman—with whom he was an especial favourite—began to recant.

"Never trouble yourself, Mr. Blake; I'll see to him, and I'm as good as my word. Poor little gentleman, he may well be fractions, lying there, day after day. But I'll see to him!"

Harold's face cleared up. Mrs. Maynard was a kind of benefactress to Harold.

He stayed at the mill, as usual, till all the workpeople were gone away. Nothing had happened during the afternoon to attract the least attention. When the workpeople were gone, he fastened all the doors, and went to the little room he occupied. At that especial moment, no one of the usual staff was in the mill, but himself. He had some business letters to send off by the post, and he sat down to write them. He was fully occupied in his work; it was a still night, and at this corner of the premises he was quiet, and scarce a sound fell upon his ear.

No warning advertised him of his danger, yet he was not alone. Six men with noiseless steps were stealing along the passage—six desperate men—intent on mischief.

What will become of Harold?

(To be continued.)

JOE'S JACKET POCKETS.

CHAPTER I.

"H-H-H!" says Joe, with a breath that an old tar, or an ancient cabby might have drawn; "ah-h-h! this is what I call jolly, now."

The morning is bright, and the air is clear, but to any half-starved or ill-clad being the intense rawness thereof must be terrible indeed. The hedges and trees are thickly encrusted with frost, and glisten like silver; on the ponds merry boys are sliding and tumbling about in all directions; a lively redbreast has perched himself on one of the silvery sprays, and is piping away with all his might. In short, it is a winter's morning, exceeding fair, and desperately cold. But with that cosy pea-jacket of his, and those comfortable pockets, Joe feels that he can bid defiance to the fiercest of weathers.

Now, while Joey is stamping along the hard ground,

and whistling a rival lay against the robin hard by, we will give you an account of the jacket, and, more important still, the pockets.

You could not look at Joey's shining face and clean white collar, without being sure that he had a kind and careful mother to keep him in trim. It was his mother who gave him that jacket. "Oh," you say, "I see nothing remarkable in that." Well, perhaps not; but I will tell you under what circumstances she gave it him.

Joey's mother is a widow. Her husband was a seaman in Her Majesty's navy, and met his death in one of the actions of the Crimean war. But through some irregularity, which I cannot attempt to explain, the widow had no pension or relief; so Mrs. Meadows (that was her name) had to make her living with her needle. Both Meadows and his wife had seen better times, and had minds and tastes above the class with which they latterly had been obliged to associate; in

proof of which I will ask you to accompany me to Widow Meadows's cottage.

The door opens at once into the room, which serves for "parlour, kitchen, and all," and close to the window sits an anxious but hopeful-looking body, who is stitching away with all her might. To those busy hands you have already traced the whiteness of Joe's collar and the neatness of his clothes. Some one else is standing there, and evidently waiting for something or somebody, but of him we will for the present take no notice.

On looking round, we find the room, small as it is, woefully bare of furniture; but in one corner we discover a goodly-sized bookcase well filled with volumes of most respectable appearance. To this Mrs. Meadows often glances with pride and satisfaction, for it reminds her of her clever husband, who, she thinks, was one of the most talented men the world ever saw; and it is also her ambition to bring up Joe the Second in the steps of his father, and to secure for him in his riper years the same bookcase with its treasury of knowledge. Since her husband's death she has had many a hard tussle with that wolf at the door—poverty. Chairs, and other small articles of furniture, have found their reluctant way to the broker's, hence the bare appearance of the dwelling. But the bookcase she has vowed to keep till the last, albeit it has had two or three narrow escapes, at times when needlework has been cheap or scarce, and the poor mother has been at a loss how to feed and clothe her three little ones. She has but recently gone through one of these pinching times, and from three weeks ago until to-day has not been able to meet her landlord's weekly demands for rent. A fortnight ago he fixed to-day as the furthest limit he would allow her credit for, and threatened that if she failed him then, he would be obliged to seize her furniture. The poor woman was much cast down on hearing this, but knowing that God will help those who help themselves, she made many appeals to her patrons, and obtained an unusual amount of profitable employment. At the end of the first week she found to her great joy that she would be able, with next week's work alone, to pay the rent which was due, and, having in hand a few surplus shillings, and seeing poor Joe shivering in the cold for want of a coat, she bought some cloth, and made him the jacket he now wears, with—at his own especial request—the two capacious pockets I have already mentioned, denying herself many little things of which she stood in great need.

Having obtained the much-desired pockets, Joey's next important business was the furnishing them with all the treasures he could obtain. And furnish them he did, with things in season and out of season. So long as he could fill these wonderful store-houses, which at present he valued far more than the one which his mother is keeping for him, his head might go empty enough. In an incredibly short time they began to puff out and bulge out with properties of a very miscellaneous description. Into the corner of the one went a peg-top; into the corner of the other a pocket-knife, with a sadly mutilated blade, which had

done its best upon stout hedge-stakes and upon the edges of Joey's desk at the village school. On these solid foundations rested sundry matters, such as a hank of string, a few brass buttons, a stout pop-gun, a mischievous-looking sling, by means of which Joey had broken a window-pane a few weeks ago, and for which his mother of course had to pay; and last, and most important of all, a dozen or two of marbles which he has been accumulating during the last few days. Now I must say that these marbles ought to weigh more heavily in his pocket than they do; for if Joey had been in his play as fair as the weather is this fine winter's morning, most of them would have been lying in other pockets than his. Joey has had some little experience in "taws and alleys," and his cupidity induces him to play with all the young novices he can get hold of. The other day he fell in with little Tom Robins, whose mother had just bought him a bagful of bran new marbles of all kinds and degrees, and proposed "Just one game, Tommy. Dare say I shall lose, though."

Crafty Joe! he had no intention of losing a single marble. Poor Tommy assented, and they soon were a pair of devoted little players, on their knees at "knuckle" and "holey." The little victim's bag gradually shrunk; repeated demands of one, two, and three combined to exhaust the exchequer upon which Tommy that morning had gazed with pride and hope.

Poor Tommy! he was a very small boy, yet not so much of a Lilliputian but he could see that Joe's method of playing was extremely one-sided, and once he ventured to deliver himself of that opinion. But Joey assumed an honest indignation, and was walking off the field with an air of injured innocence, when a tall boy stepped up and said—

"Now, Joe, none of that. I've watched you a good bit, and noticed that you didn't play fair."

"What has that got to do with you?" replied Joey, for he was what boys call "jolly cheeky."

"What has it got to do with me, you young scamp! Just this—I'm not going to see that little 'un cheated."

"How do you know I was cheating? and, what's more, it's no business of yours," said Joe, sullenly, as he edged slowly away.

"I'll teach you to know what business it is of mine," shouted the other, who had now become thoroughly angered, "so just you shell out quietly, or I'll very soon make you."

So saying, little Tommy's advocate made towards the young culprit with a view to hastening the transaction; but Joey took up a large stone from the road saying, "I'll pitch this at your shins if you come after me."

But the tall boy treated this as an empty threat, and made a spring towards Joe; not with any success, however, for down came the heavy stone upon one of his shins, which rendered him quite lame for some time; and so Joe took to his heels without a chance of being captured—for that day.

Joey has carried these ill-gotten treasures some

two or three days, but they weigh heavily in his pocket; he has some remains of a conscience, too, and they lie rather unpleasantly on that. But what troubles him more than all is the prospect of falling in with the tall boy, who is sure, he thinks, to take his revenge. Although he has just exclaimed how jolly the walk is, he is not over bright about it mentally, for the reason I have just given you. The tall boy lives in that direction, and Joey would by no means walk in it, were he not bound on an errand for his mother. For this is the day for the paying of the rent, and the landlord came as punctually as the clock to take the money. He looked considerably mollified as the widow took out two pieces of gold, but said, "I am sorry to say, Mrs. Meadows, I have not enough silver with me to give you the change you require. Can you manage without it?"

"No, indeed," said Mrs. Meadows, "for this is all I have. But if you would not mind waiting a few minutes, I will send my son to get change for a sovereign."

"Thank you," said the landlord, "that will do. And let me see how sharp your little boy can be about it. I shall soon be in want of an active boy for my city office."

The widow brightened up a good deal on hearing this, and said, "Joey, dear, come here."

"Yes, mother." And the landlord saw a sharp-enough looking boy, with very bright and twinkling eyes.

"Take this sovereign," said his mother, "to Goody Jones, and say that I shall be much obliged to her if she will change this for me, in silver. Be sure to take care of it, for it is very valuable; don't put it in your pocket, but keep it in your hand all the way; and above all, make haste, and stop with none of your playmates."

"Very well, mother," said Joe, and off he went. By this time he is very nearly at Goody Jones's; and we shall soon see how he executes his errand.

CHAPTER II.

JOEY was already within sight of his destination, when he began to see signs of a coming storm; not a storm of snow, or hail, or thunder, or rain, but one which has a much more solemnising effect on the mind of an unthinking boy. The street he had just turned into was clear enough when he entered it, for he saw only another boy there besides himself; but this boy, as soon as he caught sight of Joe, darted into a doorway, from whence speedily issued the tall boy I have already introduced to my reader, and who was evidently anxious to reintroduce himself to the notice of Joey. In a very few minutes the tidings of Joe's arrival spread through the street, and out thronged a small army of boys to see the fun, and, if possible, to have a share in it. Joey saw himself hopelessly surrounded, and though he made a gallant dash for it, it was all of no use; he was being hemmed in closer and closer, and at last he felt himself in the firm grip of his old adversary.

Joey now prepared himself for the worst. He remembered the big stone, and had seen the intense pain the tall boy had suffered when struck by it. So when he received, as a sort of preliminary, a good shaking, he felt extremely frightened. "Oh! do, please let me go this time," he pleaded; "mother's sent me about something very particular—and the landlord's waiting—and I'm to go to Good Jones's for change—and I've got a lot of money to take care of—and—" All of which was very true; but as the tall boy had been waiting about for the captive the last two or three days, he didn't see the force of the appeal, so, he said—

"Oh, yes, I've no doubt all the world is impatient to have you safe back again; but all the world will have to wait till I have got out of you all I mean to have."

And Joey trembled again. "But *please* (how very civil Joey had become all at once)—*please* let me off this time, and I'll give you my word I'll—"

"Not a bit of it." Another shake. "And you'll give me your word, will you, my young gentleman? Pretty word, indeed! Hark! you boys," continued the tall boy, turning to a crowd that had gathered close round them, "Master Joseph Meadows, a cheater of little boys, and filcher of marbles, informs me that he will give me his word."

Here all the boys laughed and danced about in triumphant chorus.

"Now, boys, how much should you say his word is worth?"

"Not worth a straw," said one.

"Worth about one hundred thousandth part of a farthing," said another, who had evidently "gone into fractions" at school.

"Not worth a kick," put in a slangy boy.

"Never mind that, though," said the tall boy; "but look you, young shaver; all I've got to say to you is this: in the first place you deserve a thorough licking for pitching that murderous stone at me; what have you to say against it?"

"I'll never do so any more," blubbered Joe, now thoroughly terrified out of his "cheekiness."

"And, in the second place, you ought not only to fork out this boy Tommy's marbles, but give up your own to him too."

"Oh, that aint fair at all!" protested Joe, for a moment forgetting his bodily fears in his alarm for the safety of his property.

"Bless me!" exclaimed the tall boy, derisively, "it seems that our young gentleman has very proper notions of what is right and fair towards himself. Now, as to the licking, I shall pass over that this time—"

"Oh!" exclaimed Joe, considerably relieved.

"But I'm determined not to let you go till you have given back to Tommy Robins here every marble you cheated him out of the other day. Now look sharp, and take them out of those bulging pockets of yours, and I'll let you go."

Joey let drop the sovereign into the pocket where his marbles lay, and, with a very rueful face, proceeded to drag out the heavy bagful of marbles; but

as he did so, he noticed that in their anxiety to inspect the contents of this bag the boys had left a small gap on one side, through which he might possibly make an escape. So, making a sudden dart round, he got off clear, with the bag of marbles in his hand; but they were soon after him, and, overpowered by numbers, he was borne to the ground. In vain he writhed, and kicked, and shouted; he was held firmly down, and Tommy's marbles were restored to their rightful owner, who, poor, little, tender-hearted boy, was in tears at being the cause of such a contest and hubbub, and, had he dared, would have been glad to let the cheat keep his ill-gotten treasures, rather than this stir should be made about it; but the tall boy had taken up the matter, and, very properly, declared he would see the little victim righted.

After a farewell shout of triumph, the boys gradually dispersed, and allowed Joe to go the rest of his way. So on he went, grieving bitterly for the loss of the marbles, until he came to Goody Jones's, when, feeling in his pocket for the sovereign, he could not find it. The pocket was quickly cleared; out came the remnant of the marbles, the popgun, the string, and the pocket-knife, but no sovereign. He then turned his pocket inside out, and then he saw how the sovereign had disappeared. There was a hole in the corner just large enough for it to slip through. The weight of the marbles, and the sharp edges of the pocket-knife, had done this between them.

A new and sorer trouble now fell upon Joe. There was nothing for it now, but to go home and tell his mother of the misfortune. He stayed a few minutes, looking carefully over the scene of his late struggle, but could nowhere find it.

The landlord had become very impatient, and the widow was making many apologies, when Joey stole in, his jacket covered with dust from the road, and his face wearing a most forlorn expression.

"Why, what is the matter, Joey, dear?" asked his mother, with some alarm. "Have you got into any trouble?"

Poor Joe burst into tears. He was suffering for it now, for he was really fond of his mother. The hardest thing of all was to tell her he had lost the money, for he knew that she would be sorely grieved, and with reason, as so much had depended on that little piece of gold.

"Pray speak up at once, Joey," pursued the anxious mother. "What has happened? have you got the change?"

"No, mother, I haven't," said Joey, through his sobs. "I have lost the sovereign."

"Lost the sovereign!" echoed his mother. "Oh! my son, my son, what will become of us?"

But that was a question which Joe could not answer. As soon as the first excitement had subsided, he was minutely questioned about the whole circumstance, and then the poor mother learned what a deceitful as well as careless boy her son had become.

"And now, sir, what will you do?" asked Mrs. Meadows, with some anxiety, of the landlord.

"Do?" replied he, rather sternly, but yet sorrowfully, "I scarcely know *what* to do. I have made it a rule to fix a date, and never to go a day beyond it: I am always punctual in the payment of my debts, and that makes it necessary that others should be punctual with me. I am afraid that for my word's sake, I shall be obliged to send in the brokers; and the only likely thing I see in the place is that bookcase of yours."

"Oh, sir, if you could only spare that," said the widow, with tears in her eyes, "I will let anything else go—the table, the chairs—anything rather than the bookcase."

"Well, well," said the landlord, hurriedly turning away, for he began to be a little moved by the widow's grief, "don't fret about it; I will consider the matter, and let you know to-morrow. Whew! mind yourself, my little man!" suddenly exclaimed he as he stepped out at the door, for at that moment a little boy ran headlong against him, shouting at the top of his voice, "Where's Joey Meadows?"

"What's up now?" asked the landlord, as he turned in again after the little screamer.

"Why," said the little screamer, holding above his head something bright and yellow, "*this* is up. I found it just now."

The bright, yellow something, as my reader has already guessed, was the missing sovereign; but perhaps he has not found out the finder. It was little Tommy Robins.

So as far as that went, all came right again: but Joey never went to the city office.

KEY TO ENIGMA ON PAGE 464.

"Be strong in the Lord."—Eph. vi. 10.

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| 1. B ethshan | 2 Sam. xxxi. 12. |
| 2. E drei | Deut. iii. 1. |
| 3. S henir | Deut. iii. 9. |
| 4. T ob | Judg. xi. 3. |
| 5. R amah | 1 Kings xv. 21. |
| 6. O phir | 1 Kings ix. 23. |
| 7. N aphtali | 2 Kings xv. 29. |
| 8. G adi's | 2 Kings xv. 14. |
| 9. I smaiah | 1 Chron. xii. 4. |
| 10. N ahash's | 2 Sam. xvii. 27. |
| 11. T ibhath | 1 Chron. xviii. 8. |
| 12. H eman | 1 Chron. xv. 17. |
| 13. E thanim | 1 Kings viii. 2. |
| 14. L ahmi | 1 Chron. xx. 5. |
| 15. O bed-edom | 1 Chron. xv. 24. |
| 16. R ei | 1 Kings i. 8. |
| 17. D elaiah's | Neh. vi. 10. |

SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC.

A FALSE APOSTLE.

1. A host and kinsman of St. Paul's.
2. One who was struck dead on the spot.
3. The chief herdsman to a king.
4. A priest who was slain for assisting a king.
5. A king of Egypt who carried away the treasures of the Temple and of the king's house.